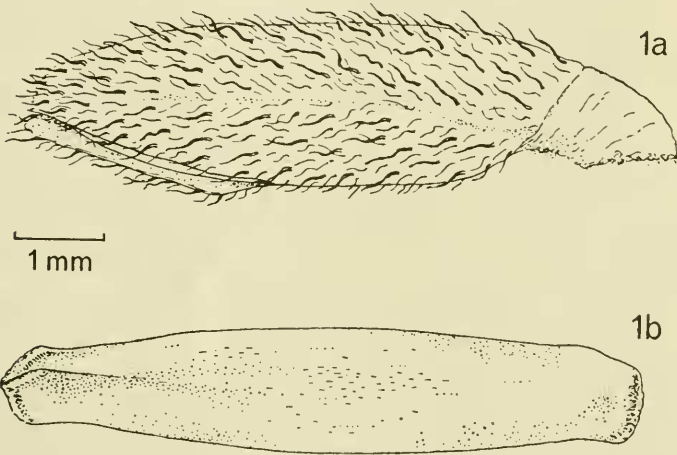


Coleophora albicosta (Haworth, 1828)(Lep.: Coleophoridae) — an Anomalous Life-History
for a Coleophorid LarvaBy K. P. BLAND¹

While searching for the larval cases of *Coleophora albicosta* (Haworth, 1828) in the dead flowers of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus* Lin.) collected on Blackford Hill, Edinburgh on 1st December 1979, I became aware that the larval case in which this species passes the winter and then pupates is different from that in which it spends the autumn. The case in which the larva feeds in the autumn is roughly cigar-shaped and formed from a shaped fragment of the calyx (see Figure 1a).



The case is thus covered with fine brownish hairs. During November the larva abandons this autumn case — often leaving it attached to some part of a dead gorse flower — and seeks out the space between the petals of the keel and the upper surface of the boat-shaped lower calyx lobe. In this space the larva spins itself a case entirely of silk (see Figure 1b). The larva in two of the 15 cases found were still in the process of spinning their cases and their activities could be clearly seen through the transparent case. When looked at a few days later, the case was opaque and apparently complete. The completed case is brownish in colour, somewhat triangular in cross-section and firmly attached to the adjacent parts of the dead gorse flower. In this case the larva lives out the winter and then pupates. The life-history of *C. albicosta* is thus unusual in that when fully fed the larva abandons its case of plant material for a case spun entirely of silk and constructed specially for pupation — this appears to be unique amongst the British Coleophoridae.

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